



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

# Probation inspection standards

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## **Regional standards**

### **Domain one – Organisational arrangements and activity**

#### **R 1.1 Leadership**

**Regional leadership drives the delivery of a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service for people on probation.**

***R 1.1.1 Does the regional vision and strategy drive the effective delivery of high-quality services for all people on probation?***

- a) Does the regional vision and strategy set out how high-quality supervision and services for people on probation will be delivered?
- b) Does the regional vision and strategy take a deliberate approach to diverse needs and set out how these will be met?
- c) Does the regional vision and strategy set out a clear plan for commissioning?
- d) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear regional delivery plans that translate the vision and strategy into practice?
- e) Is the regional vision and strategy based on a comprehensive analysis of risk, needs, and strengths?
- f) Is the regional vision and strategy evidence based?

***R 1.1.2 Does regional leadership activity drive the effective delivery of high-quality services for all people on probation?***

- a) Do regional arrangements for commissioned services deliver high-quality services to people on probation?
- b) Are high-quality services available to all people on probation in this region?
- c) Do regional leaders understand and drive improvement to the quality of work across the region?
- d) When carrying out changes to systems, processes, or staffing, is the impact on service delivery, including equality impact, assessed, and appropriate action taken?
- e) Do regional leaders collaborate sufficiently with partners and stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of the vision and strategy?
- f) Does the regional leadership take a deliberate, strategic, and informed approach to meeting diverse needs?
- g) Are risks to service delivery understood sufficiently, with appropriate mitigations and controls in place?

***R 1.1.3 Do regional leaders engage actively with staff, to drive the effective delivery of high-quality services for all people on probation?***

- a) Are staff in the region engaged, motivated, and proud to work for the Probation Service?
- b) Does the region's culture promote openness, constructive challenge, and ideas?
- c) Do regional leaders provide promotion opportunities equitably, and recognise and reward exceptional work?

- d) Do regional leaders ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for staff in accordance with statutory requirements and protected characteristics?
- e) Are there clear routes from complaints, with support for staff if they feel discriminated against or experience any form of discrimination?

***R 1.1.4 Do regional leaders use analysis, evidence, and learning to drive the effective delivery of high-quality services for all people on probation?***

- a) Are the views of people on probation and other key stakeholders sought, analysed, and used to review and improve the effectiveness of probation services?
- b) Are the views of people on probation and other key stakeholders sought, analysed, and used to review and improve the effectiveness of commissioned services?
- c) Do regional leaders understand and use diversity information to drive improvement?
- d) Are services improved through evaluation and development of the underlying evidence base?
- e) Does the region learn systematically from things that go wrong, including Serious Further Offences?
- f) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in response to performance monitoring, audit, or inspection?

## **R 1.2 Staffing**

**Staff are enabled to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all people on probation.**

***R 1.2.1 Do arrangements for regional staffing support the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Are regional staffing levels sufficient?
- b) Are regional staff workloads manageable?
- c) Is the potential of regional staff developed?
- d) Is sufficient access provided to training for regional staff?
- e) Is a culture of learning and continuous improvement promoted actively across the region?
- f) Do staff receive effective supervision that enhances and sustains the quality of work with people on probation?
- g) Is poor regional staff performance identified and addressed?
- h) Are management oversight arrangements effective?

***R 1.2.2 Do arrangements for PDU staffing support the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

Aggregated ratings for standard P 1.2 from all of the region's PDU inspections generate a rating for key question R 1.2.2 which is combined with the evidence for R 1.2.1. The Rules and Guidance provides full details.

## Domain two – Service delivery

### Public protection

#### R 2.1 High-quality, personalised, and responsive services are delivered to protect the public.

##### ***R 2.1.1 Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?***

- a) Does assessment identify and analyse clearly any risk of harm to others?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?

##### ***R 2.1.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?***

- a) Does planning address sufficiently risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical?
- b) Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm?
- c) Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the person on probation and any multi-agency plans?
- d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?

##### ***R 2.1.3 Does the implementation and delivery of services support the safety of other people effectively?***

- a) Are the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?
- b) Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims?
- c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?
- d) Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support the effective management of risk of harm?
- e) Are home visits undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm?

##### ***R 2.1.4 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?***

- a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?
- c) Is the person on probation (and, where appropriate, are key individuals in their life) involved meaningfully in reviewing the risk of harm?
- d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the risk of harm?

## Desistance

### R 2.2 High-quality, personalised, and responsive services are delivered to promote desistance.

#### ***R 2.2.1 Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?***

- a) Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?
- b) Does assessment identify the strengths and protective factors of the person on probation?
- c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?

#### ***R 2.2.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?***

- a) Does planning reflect sufficiently offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical?
- b) Does planning build on the individual's strengths and protective factors, utilising potential sources of support?
- c) Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?

#### ***R 2.2.3 Does the implementation and delivery of services support desistance effectively?***

- a) Are the delivered services those most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?
- b) Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the individual's strengths and enhance protective factors?
- c) Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well coordinated?
- d) Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support their desistance?
- e) Are the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?
- f) Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond?

#### ***R 2.2.4 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?***

- a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors linked to offending behaviour, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building on the strengths and enhancing the protective factors of the person on probation?
- c) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the person on probation?

- d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance?

### **Court work**

#### **R 2.3 The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making.**

##### ***R 2.3.1 Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making?***

- a) Does the information and advice draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including child safeguarding and domestic abuse information?
- b) Is the individual involved meaningfully in the preparation of the report, and are their views considered?
- c) Does the advice consider factors related to the likelihood of reoffending?
- d) Does the advice consider factors related to risk of harm?
- e) Does the advice consider the individual's motivation and readiness to change?
- f) Does the advice consider the individual's diversity and personal circumstances?
- g) Does the advice consider the impact of the offence on known or identifiable victims?
- h) Is an appropriate proposal made to court?
- i) Is there a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it?

### **Unpaid work**

#### **R 2.4 Unpaid work is delivered safely and effectively, engaging the person on probation in line with the expectations of the court.**

##### ***R 2.4.1 Is the assessment and planning of unpaid work personalised?***

- a) Does assessment and planning consider the individual's diversity, protected characteristics, and personal circumstances, and the impact that these have on their ability to comply and engage with unpaid work?
- b) Does assessment and planning for unpaid work identify and build upon the individual's strengths and enhance their protective factors?
- c) Does assessment and planning for unpaid work identify and address factors related to risk of harm?

##### ***R 2.4.2 Do arrangements for unpaid work maximise rehabilitative elements and support desistance?***

- a) Is the allocated work suitable, taking account of the individual's diversity and personal circumstances?
- b) Does unpaid work offer opportunities for education, training, and the development of employment-related skills?
- c) Is clear information given to the person on probation to enable compliance?

##### ***R 2.4.3 Is unpaid work delivered safely?***

- a) Does the delivery of unpaid work take account of risk of harm to other people on probation, staff, or the public?

- b) Does unpaid work consider issues relating to the health and safety or potential vulnerability of the person on probation?

***R 2.4.4 Is the sentence of the court implemented appropriately?***

- a) Does unpaid work commence promptly and happen regularly?
- b) Do arrangements for unpaid work encourage the individual's engagement and compliance with the order?
- c) Are appropriate professional judgements made in relation to decisions about missed appointments?
- d) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?

**Resettlement**

**R 2.5 Resettlement work is timely, personalised, and coordinated, addressing the individual's resettlement needs and supporting their integration into the community.**

***R 2.5.1 Is resettlement timely, personalised, and coordinated, and does it address key resettlement needs and support the individual's integration into the community?***

- a) Was there a clear handover from the prison offender manager to the community offender manager at an appropriate point before release?
- b) Was there sufficient information sharing between prison-based staff and the community offender manager?
- c) Did the community offender manager ensure a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release?
- d) Did the community offender manager identify and address the key resettlement or desistance needs before release?
- e) Did the community offender manager identify and address the key risk of harm issues before release?
- f) Are resettlement services delivered in line with the individual's resettlement needs, prioritising those which are most critical?
- g) Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity with other services being delivered in the prison?
- h) Do resettlement services support effective handover to local services in the community?



## Statutory victim work

**R 2.6 Relevant and timely information is provided to victims of a serious offence, and they are given the opportunity to contribute their views at key points in the sentence.**

### ***R 2.6.1 Does initial contact with victims encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme and provide information about sources of support?***

- a) Is appropriate initial contact made soon after sentence, with consideration given to the timing of such contact?
- b) Are the initial letters personalised appropriately, considering the nature of the experience of victims and any diversity issues?
- c) Is clear information given to victims about what they can expect at different points in a sentence?
- d) Do the initial letters include sufficient information to enable victims to make an informed choice as to whether to participate in the scheme?
- e) Are victims informed about the action they can take if the prisoner/person on probation attempts to make unwanted contact with them?
- f) Are victims referred to other agencies or services, or given information about available sources of help and support?

### ***R 2.6.2 Is there effective information and communication exchange to support the safety of victims?***

- a) Are victim liaison staff involved in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements where appropriate?
- b) Do victim liaison staff share relevant information with the probation practitioner?
- c) Are the concerns of the victims addressed and is attention paid to their safety in planning for release?
- d) Are victim liaison staff provided with appropriate and timely information about the management of the individual?

### ***R 2.6.3 Does pre-release contact with victims allow them to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release?***

- a) Are victims given the opportunity to contribute their views to inform decisions about the release of the prisoner/person on probation in a timely way, and supported in doing so?
- b) Are views expressed by victims treated appropriately and in accordance with the victim contact scheme?
- c) Are victims supported in making a victim personal statement in parole applications?

## **PDU standards**

### **Domain one – Organisational arrangements and activity**

#### **P 1.1 Leadership**

The leadership of the PDU enables the delivery of a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service for all people on probation.

***P 1.1.1 Does the PDU vision and strategy drive the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear local delivery arrangements that translate the vision and strategy into frontline practice?
- b) Does the PDU leadership team engage sufficiently with partners and stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of the vision and strategy?
- c) Do PDU staff understand the PDU delivery arrangements, how the service should be delivered, and what they are accountable for?
- d) Are risks to PDU service delivery understood sufficiently, with appropriate mitigations and controls in place?

***P 1.1.2 Does the PDU leadership team drive provision of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Does the PDU leadership take a deliberate, strategic, and informed approach to meeting diverse needs?
- b) Are policies and clear guidance in place about the full range of locally commissioned services, their suitability for individual people on probation, and referral processes?
- c) Are policies and guidance communicated, to and understood by, relevant staff?
- d) When carrying out changes to systems, processes, or staffing, is the impact on service delivery, including equality impact, assessed and appropriate action taken?

***P 1.1.3 Do PDU leaders engage actively with staff to achieve the effective delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Does the PDU's culture promote openness, constructive challenge, and ideas?
- b) Are staff well engaged and motivated?
- c) Is appropriate attention paid to staff safety and wellbeing, and building staff resilience?
- d) Do PDU leaders ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for staff, in accordance with statutory requirements and protected characteristics?
- e) Are there clear routes from complaints, with support for staff if they feel discriminated against or experience any form of discrimination?

***P 1.1.4 Do PDU leaders use analysis, evidence, and learning to drive the effective delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Do PDU leaders understand and use diversity information to drive improvement?
- b) Does PDU delivery take sufficient account of the views of people on probation?

- c) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in relation to performance monitoring, audit, and inspection?
- d) Does the PDU learn systematically from things that go wrong, including Serious Further Offences?
- e) Is learning communicated effectively?

## **P 1.2 Staffing**

**Staff are enabled to deliver a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service for all people on probation.**

### ***P 1.2.1 Do staff and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Are PDU staffing levels sufficient?
- b) Do practitioners have manageable workloads, given the profile of the cases and the range of work undertaken?
- c) Do administrative staff have manageable workloads?
- d) Do heads of service for the PDU and middle managers have manageable workloads?
- e) Are workloads managed actively, with resources being redeployed, when this is reasonable and necessary, in response to local pressures?

### ***P 1.2.2 Do the skills and profile of staff support the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?***

- a) Does the workforce reflect adequately the diversity of the local population?
- b) Does the diversity of the workforce meet caseload needs?
- c) Are cases allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?
- d) Is the potential of staff identified and developed?
- e) Where volunteers and mentors are used, are they supported to fulfil clearly defined roles?

### ***P 1.2.3 Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?***

- a) Is an effective induction programme delivered to new staff that addresses issues of diversity and is accessible to all?
- b) Do staff receive effective case-focused supervision that enhances and sustains the quality of work with people on probation?
- c) Are there effective management oversight arrangements that enhance and sustain the quality of work with people on probation?
- d) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure that staff are delivering a high-quality service?
- e) Are the learning needs of staff identified and met?
- f) Is poor staff performance identified and addressed?
- g) Is a culture of learning and continuous improvement promoted actively?

## **P 1.3 Services**

**A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, supporting a tailored and responsive service for all people on probation.**

### ***P 1.3.1 Are high-quality services provided to meet the needs of people on probation?***

- a) Is there a diverse and flexible range of services that meet identified risk and needs and build strengths?
- b) Is building strengths and enhancing protective factors central to the delivery of services?
- c) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality addressed sufficiently in the way that services are delivered?
- d) Are services delivered in appropriate and accessible locations?
- e) Is the delivery of services informed by regular robust evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and review?

### ***P 1.3.2 Are the right range and volume of services provided to meet the needs of people on probation?***

- a) Does the volume of services available meet demand consistently?
- b) Are there clear and well-understood access and referral routes for services?
- c) Are services available in a timely manner for people on probation?
- d) Is there effective collaborative working between service providers and probation practitioners?
- e) Are courts kept up to date with the services available, to support sentencing options?

## Domain two – Service delivery

### P 2.1 Assessment

Assessment is well informed, analytical, and personalised, involving actively the person on probation.

#### *P 2.1.1 Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?*

- a) Does assessment analyse the motivation and readiness of the person on probation to engage and comply with the sentence?
- b) Does assessment analyse the protected characteristics of the individual and consider the impact of these on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?
- c) Does assessment analyse the personal circumstances of the individual and consider the impact of these on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?
- d) Is the person on probation involved meaningfully in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?

#### *P 2.1.2 Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?*

- a) Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?
- b) Does assessment identify the strengths and protective factors of the person on probation?
- c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?

#### *P 2.1.3 Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?*

- a) Does assessment identify and analyse clearly any risk of harm to others?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?

### P 2.2 Planning

Planning is well informed, holistic, and personalised, involving actively the person on probation.

#### *P 2.2.1 Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?*

- a) Is the person on probation involved meaningfully in planning, and are their views taken into account?
- b) Does planning take sufficient account of the protected characteristics of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance?
- c) Does planning take sufficient account of the personal circumstances of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance?
- d) Does planning take sufficient account of the readiness and motivation of the person on probation to change which may affect engagement and compliance?
- e) Does planning set out how all the requirements of the sentence or licence/post-sentence supervision will be delivered within the available timescales?

- f) Does planning set a level, pattern, and type of contact sufficient to engage the individual and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions?

***P 2.2.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?***

- a) Does planning reflect sufficiently offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical?
- b) Does planning build on the individual's strengths and protective factors, utilising potential sources of support?
- c) Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?

***P 2.2.3 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?***

- a) Does planning address sufficiently risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical?
- b) Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm?
- c) Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the person on probation and any multi-agency plans?
- d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?

## **P 2.3 Implementation and delivery**

**High-quality well-focused, personalised, and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the person on probation.**

***P 2.3.1 Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?***

- a) Do the requirements of the sentence start promptly, or at an appropriate time?
- b) Is sufficient focus given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the person on probation, taking into account their diversity needs?
- c) Are sufficient efforts made to enable the individual to complete their sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances?
- d) Are risks of non-compliance identified and addressed in a timely fashion to reduce the need for enforcement actions?
- e) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?
- f) Are sufficient efforts made to re-engage the individual after enforcement actions or recall?

***P 2.3.2 Does the implementation and delivery of services support desistance effectively?***

- a) Are the delivered services those most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?

- b) Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the individual's strengths and enhance protective factors?
- c) Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well coordinated?
- d) Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support their desistance?
- e) Are the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?
- f) Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond?

***P 2.3.3 Does the implementation and delivery of services support the safety of other people effectively?***

- a) Are the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?
- b) Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims?
- c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?
- d) Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support the effective management of risk of harm?
- e) Are home visits undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm?

## **P 2.4 Reviewing**

**Reviewing of progress is well informed, analytical, and personalised, involving actively the person on probation.**

***P 2.4.1 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?***

- a) Does reviewing consider compliance and engagement levels, and any relevant barriers, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Is the person on probation involved meaningfully in reviewing their progress and engagement?
- c) Are written reviews completed when appropriate as a formal record of actions to implement the sentence?

***P 2.4.2 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?***

- a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors linked to offending behaviour, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building on the strengths and enhancing the protective factors of the person on probation?
- c) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the person on probation?

- d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance?

***P 2.4.3 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?***

- a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?
- c) Is the person on probation (and, where appropriate, are key individuals in their life) involved meaningfully in reviewing the risk of harm?
- d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the risk of harm?